

ERASMUS' *DE RATIONE STUDII*: ITS RELATIONSHIP TO
SIXTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE

A CRITICAL EDITION AND TRANSLATION
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

JAMES FRANCIS LARKIN

B.A., St. Viator College, 1932

A.M., University of Illinois, 1941

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN
ENGLISH IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, 1942

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AUTHOR

Desiderius Erasmus (?1466-1536), the author of *De Ratione Studii*, a brief Latin treatise on educational and literary method, is probably the best known of the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century scholars on whose account the nineteenth-century critics coined the terms "Humanism" and "Renaissance." It was necessary, therefore, as a biographical introduction to the present edition of this tract, to touch only those events in his life connecting him with England up to the publication of that work in 1511.

After his grammar-school training under the Brothers of the Common Life at Deventer in his native Holland, Erasmus entered the Augustinian Canons Regular at Steyn. In 1496 he began advanced theological studies in the University of Paris, where, in the tutoring of three English students, Robert Fisher, Thomas Grey, and William Blount (generous patron, and later Lord Mountjoy), his English relations began.

By 1511, Erasmus had made three trips to England; on the first of these, in 1499, he became acquainted with virtually all the famous literary personages of the age: the future St. Thomas More, the future Henry VIII, Father Colet, Grocyn, and Linacre. A second journey, 1505-1506, for the purpose of obtaining a benefice, resulted in introductions to Bishop Warham, later reliable patron, and Bishop John Fisher, who presumably introduced him to Cambridge at this time. Part of this period he spent with More, translating into Latin the Lucianic Dialogues so highly recommended later in *De Ratione Studii*. Erasmus returned for the third visit in 1509, to stay on beyond the date of publication of our text. He composed the *Encomium Moriae* while enjoying once more the hospitality of More, whom he encouraged with the *Utopia*. Along with the steady allowance of Mountjoy, came the awaited pension from Bishop Warham. In the summer of 1511 he was appointed lecturer in Cambridge; in November of the same year, Bishop Fisher raised him to the Lady Margaret Chair in Divinity. Between these last two visits, *De Ratione Studii* made its first appearance.

DATE

The first evidence of the work's existence occurred in the correspondence of September, 1511, between Erasmus at Cambridge and Colet who had become Dean of St. Paul's in London.

Erasmus promised to send ahead, while Colet enthusiastically acknowledged receipt and approval of, the tract, which was still in manuscript.¹ That this manuscript was in its final form at this date is fairly clear from Colet's *verbatim* citation of a passage present only in the complete printed edition.²

The composition-date of the *De Ratione Studii* is complicated, however, by the two textual stages in which it successively appeared in print. The earlier incomplete draft was printed at Paris in October, 1511, one month after Erasmus had sent the complete manuscript to Colet. If its inscription *Londini, Idibus Martii*, is authentic, this earlier form could hardly have been composed before 1506, the first year in which Erasmus was in England in March. Against the validity of this evidence is the probability that the text was pirated. At any rate, Erasmus dedicated the later complete text to another person. Setting aside this basis for dating, and arguing from the first version's failure to include the Church Fathers recommended in the complete form, one Erasmian scholar has concluded that it must have been composed originally before 1499. This was the year of Erasmus' first visit to England, and introduction to Colet, who supposedly fired him with a Patristic zeal³ that was to result in his numerous editions of their texts. If this is true, the "Leucophaee" (literally, "gray") to whom it was addressed would be Thomas Gray, who will be remembered as one of the English boys whom Erasmus tutored in Paris in 1497. Another epistle of our author, similar in title and scope, later prefixed to an edition of *Colloquia*, may be cited in support of this place and period. This year 1497, of course, would be the earliest possible date, since it was only in this year that Erasmus met Gray.

If there is nothing definite about the compositional date of the earlier form of the text, nor much more certain about the date of its revision, there is at least no doubt concerning the publication-date of the complete form, with which the present edition is concerned. First printed by Badius in Paris in July, 1512, together with the first edition of the *De Copia*,—itself written for St. Paul's School and dedicated to Colet—this text demonstrated considerable revision of the first section of the original draft, and extensive amplification of the last, particularly in details and examples of literary composition. It was printed by Schürer in Strassburg in August, 1514, with emendations of non-essential character, and with the significant title-page warrant, "EX RECOGNITIONE Autoris."

CONTENTS

De Ratione Studii, running to some 4,500 words, is divided into two sections, the first of which presents a method of study; the second, of instructing others. The subjects in either case, Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic—constituting the traditional Trivium curriculum—are those of the sixteenth-century grammar school, which boys attended between the ages of seven and fourteen. In this institution, in England as on the Continent, all instruction, even in composition, was in the Latin tongue. While our text is a treatise on this system, it contains, above and beyond the traditional philosophy of education based on the Classics, a creative literary methodology of definite significance in the background of every writer of the English Renaissance. This methodology becomes apparent at the very outset of instruction.

Grammar is summarily disposed of by Erasmus, once the parts of speech have been memorized. The rules of syntax are to be learned from simple Latin texts like Aesop's Fables, or Cato's Distichs which Erasmus edited, incidentally, in 1513. Advanced constructions and figures are learned from text-books, to be sure, but especially from wide reading in the Classical literature itself, and from practice in imitative composition. The inductive features of this grammatical philosophy throw light not only on Erasmus' concept of education as a preparation for creative literature, but also on the sixteenth-century English syntax of men whose only schooling had been in this theory of Latin grammar, and that largely in the official text in the original form of which Erasmus had an authorial share.

While Erasmus' concept of rhetoric, the second branch of the Trivium, gives adequate expression to the ideal of able speaking, the systematic details of his unfolding of that concept are entirely concerned with written Latin composition. Hence the importance of *De Ratione Studii* for the background of English literary composition. According to its method, these compositions are to begin with the virtual copying out of simple *sententiae*, anecdotes, aphorisms, fable, and proverbs. Two of its many examples are: 'Excessive eloquence was the ruin of Demosthenes and Cicero'; 'All see the wallet hanging before the breast; no one sees that hanging from the back,'—which last Shakespeare was to use. Sourcebooks suggested from these

gems are the collection of Valerius Maximus, and the *Adagia* of Erasmus himself. Some of the more complicated themes, following in due course, are the epistle (in Latin and Greek, in prose and verse), the five-part *disputatio*, and the *expolitio*, a full-blown literary oration of seven parts. Imitative at first, these themes are to show a progressive degree of originality through practice and the development of judgment in reading the Classics for materials. This last is the phase of *inventio*, which is simply the searching out, the 'finding,' of arguments, illustrations and figures from literary sources, to be used in filling in such outlines as the sententious topics quoted above. The Aristotelian logic, as restated in Cicero's *Topica*, comes into play at this point. Erasmus emphasizes, as he did in grammar, the functional aspects of logic in literary composition. Indeed, he refuses to separate any of the functional elements of composition: grammar, rhetoric, or logic. All, on the contrary, are aimed at a common, unified literary objective: the preparation of a mature, well-rounded, persuasive, and florid essay, or epistle, or verse, on any subject.

This Latin rhetorical program of *De Ratione Studii* was to become the proving ground of the coming English literature. Out of this view of self-expression, disciplined by imitation, broadened by eclectic practice, and inspired finally by original genius, it may here be observed, came the best of the English literature of the age. Among the men who, with no more than the grammar-school literary training which Erasmus has outlined in his tract, succeeded in making a profound cultural impression on their own and later times, one was Ben Jonson. William Shakespeare was another.

SOURCES

Few of the ideas set forth above are original with Erasmus. His chief ultimate source, as in the case of most Renaissance theorists, was Quintilian's *De Institutione Oratoria*, to which he specifically refers in five instances, and from which he has echoed, directly or otherwise, numerous statements on the method of achieving literary fluency, or *copia*. Parallels were also found with Cicero's *De Oratore*, although some of these principles had been restated by Quintilian, and Erasmus may have absorbed them from the latter, if not a more intermediate source. Other early Latin works which served as sources were the pseudo-Ciceronian *Ad Herennium*, for rhetorical figures and

elementary theme-topics; the grammar of Donatus, for grammatical figures and method of the Terentian *praelectio*; and Servius, for the background of Erasmus' interpretation of the Virgilian eclogue. The details of source-study in this edition, nonetheless, have emphasized the historical continuity of the Quintilian rhetorical tradition during the Middle Ages through the so-called "mutilated Quintilian" (the substantial integrity of which has been persistently ignored in the scholarly traditional), and, of even greater pertinence to the present study, in the Renaissance. The "rediscovery" of Quintilian established a rhetorical vogue among the Continental theorists: Guarino, Valla, Perottus, Victorinus Feltrensis, Petrus Paulus Vergerius, Leonardus Bruni, and Aeneas Silvius in Italy; in transalpine Europe, Alexander Hegius, Rodolphus Agricola, and the Brothers of the Common Life. The extant tracts of these educators show that Erasmus, who refers enthusiastically to most of them, must have read Quintilian in terms of his own age. For many of the ideas expressed in *De Ratione Studii*, the restatements of these immediate predecessors, to whose treatises his own displays remarkable similarity in form as well as scope, would have sufficed. Add to the Quintilian commonplaces the peculiarly humanistic shaping of such ideas as the summary treatment of grammar, the epistolary formulas, the favor accorded the Church Fathers in the teacher-training program, the stress of dictionary knowledge, the regard for Italian as an etymological aid, the moral interpretation of history, the specification of different levels of grammar and rhetoric, the emphasis on written rather than spoken rhetoric,—all restated in *De Ratione Studii*,—and one gains an even clearer understanding of the relationship between Erasmus and contemporary theory. The originality he may justly claim, (and his personal contribution to the Neo-Latin rhetorical tradition which carried over into the vernacular), lies in a further systematization and emphasis of all types of literary composition in the educational program. It lies in his enrichment of his theory of varied composition by numerous specific examples. This contribution appears at large in his enormously popular text-books,—the *De Copia*, *Colloquia*, *De Conscribendis Epistolis*, and *Adagia*. It is synthesized in our text.

THIS EDITION

Because of its very important synthesis of the educational and literary principles in which English writers of the age receive their first, and sometimes last, formal training,⁴ as well as for its own popularity,⁵ *De Ratione Studii* has long since deserved a critical edition and English translation, so that it might be more available to students of sixteenth-century English literary history. There is a German translation in 1896,⁶ Seeböhm's one-page English digest in the same year,⁷ and Woodward's English version of 1904.⁸ This last is characterized, unfortunately, by the defects of (1) lack of integrity, (2) tendency to paraphrase, (3) inaccuracies of terminology, and (4) interpolations. These faults the present translation seeks to redress, first by the establishment of a critical text⁹ from the collation of a wide range of contemporary and later editions,¹⁰ and by the consultation of contemporary literature, Neo-Latin and English, for light on the meaning of dubious passages. The collation resulted primarily in a complete vindication of the selection of the 1514 Strassburg edition, published with authorial warrant, as the basic text: only one error peculiar to this edition (*spernandi* for *sperandi*) was discovered. It illustrated further, the intermediate stages of textual emendation,¹¹ overlooked by Hyma, and the vicissitudes of textual history in the complement of misreadings in editions later than the authorized one.

RELATIONSHIP TO SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE

The problem of *De Ratione Studii* influence on sixteenth-century English literature is complicated by a number of factors: the brevity of its treatment, its general proportions, its composition in the Latin language, its Latin objectives, and its grammar-school provenience. These elements are not encouraging to the detection of direct effect. The fact that a definite quantitative measure of such influence is obviously impossible does not, however, militate against the search for such facts as do exist, especially since the literature on the Neo-Latin background of this period is of such slender proportions. The force of Erasmus in general on English literature is still far from clear: that of his *De Ratione Studii* has not been subjected to previous inquiry.

In the studies made to discover evidences of this influence, the path followed was from the most general to the most specific channels in which such influence might reasonably be sought. First to be examined, accordingly, were the English grammar-school statutes; St. Paul's, already known in connection with the appearance of the tract in the correspondence between Erasmus and Colet; Cardinal Wolsey's Statutory Letter to the schoolmasters of his newly founded grammar school at Ipswich in 1527; those of such representative institutions as Eton, Winchester, Canterbury, and Westminster; and various provincial charters based on one or the other of these. In this most general channel, an effort was made to determine and evaluate correspondences of these statutory provisions with *De Ratione Studii*.

One degree removed from the universality of school statutes in the background of the English literature of the century stood the Latin text-books in which future English writers received their first formal training. Perhaps most elementary of these at the grammar-school level where the *vulgaria*, or collections of Latin sayings together with their English translation. Those of Whittinton, Stanbridge, and Horman were examined for Erasmusian influence at this level. For grammar, the field was narrowed to Lily's Latin Grammar, the second part of which Erasmus himself had reworked under the original title of *De Octo Partibus Orationum Libellum*, which was to become in time, and with revisions, the only Authorized grammar of sixteenth-cen-

tury England. *De Ratione Studii* influence was sought, in the third place, in a large number of English rhetorics, by Cox, Sherry, Wilson, Reynolds, Fulwood, Flemming, and Peacham; and in the more important Latin rhetorics of Susenbrotus and Mosellanus.

More specific than the conventional school-books, and naturally more indicative of Erasmus' mind in the summary text of this edition, were his own textual contributions to the English grammar-school. These were a third, derivative approach to the influence of his 'method of study' on the vernacular letters of the century. The first of these compilations was entitled *De Copia*,—a thesaurus of Latin words and phrases much akin to our own Roget's, with additional principles and examples of rhetoric and logic necessary for composition at this level. Through this, *De Ratione Studii* was brought down to minute detail and daily student practice. Next of the Erasmian texts was the *Colloquia*, originally a notebook of formulas for Latin speaking as stipulated in our text, but in its complete form a large group of dramatic dialogues. Particularly notable was the broad English curricular embodiment of this work (with its 119 editions by 1600), and its relation to the "Classical" English drama, rather than to its original purpose of oral Latinity. The third and final Erasmian text-book used in this third approach to the influence of our text on the vernacular was his *Adagia*, a collection of some 5,000 annotated proverbs, specifically recommended to teachers, in *De Ratione Studii*, for supplying student-themes. Its influence on the literature, in turn, was sought in adaptation and translation, and in the immediate source it represented for ostensibly Classical references, both in text-books and vernacular *belles-lettres*.

The quotation-books which issued in increasing number as the century wore on were a fourth medium explored for less direct *De Ratione Studii* influence on English literature. Their connection with our work was chiefly in their concrete embodiment of its earlier insistence that a teacher collect the 'flowers of rhetoric' from the Latin authors to be read for *copia*. Some of these were mere imitations of Erasmian models of such collections. Others, like Barlandus' Latin collection of Virgilian proverbs, were more original, though still consciously attributed to the inspiration of his example. Udall's adapted *Floures of Terence* was such a work in English, as the correspondences of its *epistola nuncupatoria* with expressions in *De Ratione Studii* bear out. Other English collections studied for reflection of sim-

ilar influence were Palsgrave's *Acolastus*, Peacham's *Garden of Rhetoric*, William Baldwin's *Treatise of Morall Philosophy*, Mere's *Palladis Tamia*, and the vernacular anthologies appearing at the close of the century. An effort was made to achieve a synthesis of contemporary pedagogical opinion on the literary validity of these substitutes for a Classical education, and to indicate the consequences for later English literature flowing from the habitual school-use of these compendia in Latin composition.

The English theorists represent a fifth, still more indirect, influence of Erasmus' little work on English practice. For the canalization of this influence, the works of Elyot, Ascham, Mulcaster, Kempe, of the literary theorists, Lyly and Sidney, and of the next-century figures of Brinsley and Hoole, were considered. After making due allowance for direct influence of Classical sources on these men, and for commonplace ideas, it was nevertheless clear that their tradition had been touched, in passing, by Erasmus. It was more than touched, if one considers the directly approving allusion of Hoole, the last of them, to *De Ratione Studii* as a guide in teaching others.

Finally, as a reservoir into which these various channels of *De Ratione Studii* influence emptied, the sixteenth-century English literary theory and practice itself afforded a test of that influence, direct and indirect, general and specific. The problem of composition from the evidence of Lever, Lyly, Nashe, Sidney and Bacon, was reducible, in one sense, to the proper extent to which rhetorical figures and devices should be used. From another aspect, it was seen to be the transfer of Neo-Latin compositional rules and practices to the English language, first through translation, then through vernacular imitation on the basis of Latin reference-books. The relation of Neo-Latin to English literary types was not ignored. As a specific, and the most significant, case in point, John Lyly's so-called Euphuism was made the basis of English comparison with the Latin practice and theory of our text. The abundance in the latter, both by precept and example, of "pre-Euphuistic" expository theme, antithesis, parallel, rhetorical question, repetition, alliteration, word-play, careless syntax, rhymed prose, and allusions to history, nature, and the Classical literature, suggested the thesis that *De Ratione Studii* (which had enjoyed seventy-one editions before Lyly began to write) was the true source, instead of too-near or -distant agencies heretofore ascribed, of these "Euphuistic" phenomena in English literature.

XIII. CONCLUSION

By way of summarizing the results of this investigation, a number of conclusions stand. The first of these is that the most direct influence of *De Ratione Studii* in sixteenth-century English literature, was in the most general background, namely, the school statutes. St. Paul's School stood out as the closest and most vital link between the essay and the English system. Other statutes corroborating the first conclusion of greatest influence in the most general channel, were the new curricula from 1528 at Winchester and Eton, which were destined, with St. Paul's, to become the model of later establishments and re-establishments throughout the century. They restated its aims, prescribed its methods, repeated its emphasis on the compositional aspect of the grammar-school program. Cardinal Wolsey's Letter of 1527 expressing his wishes for the new Ipswich school, as if to certify the directness of this first influence, was largely copied out of *De Ratione Studii*, in many passages *verbatim*, in others with an occasionally varied word or phrase.

Secondly, the influence of *De Ratione Studii*, if less direct, was more profound in the actual working out of the English school curricula into text-books and specific course of study. Its concept of functional grammar became practical in the elementary *vulgaria* of Whittinton, of Horman, and of Stanbridge who professedly based his collection on the practice of St. Paul's, and in Erasmus' concise Latin grammar, which was to become, by law, part of the English school-child's burden as the century progressed. Its rhetorical method became crystallized in the *De Copia*, which, with its hundred editions, was to become the national model for varying school-composition,—as his *Colloquia*, also suggested in the provisions of the tract, was to serve the pragmatic purpose of initiating English boys into Latin speech. The *Adagia*, composed for an English pupil-patron and suggested in *De Ratione Studii* for supplying proverbs in elementary themes, was found to be one of the strongest links in this text-book chain of influence. Brinsley's approval of the *Adagia* as a reference-source for themes illustrated a significant direction given the English Renaissance at the school level. The literary implications in this respectable English pedagogue's frank suggestion how to crib from intermediate sources such as this, "without apparent stealing out of any" became immediate apparent.

The text of the present edition, in the third place, asserted unmistakably the generalizations which, with the passage of time and its own diffusion into print, became concrete and specific in the English rhetorical methodology,—down to such *minutiae* as the actual inscriptions on the walls, doors, and windows at St. Paul's School. The *Tabulae de Schematibus* of Mosellanus, a popular booklet any schoolboy might be expected to memorize, acknowledges its origin in a *De Ratione Studii* suggestion of exactly such a work for the more effective teaching of the rhetorical figures. By all means most specific of these developments were the author's own *De Copia*, *Colloquia* and *Adagia*, already considered under the aspect of text-books. To measure the absolute influence of *De Ratione Studii* on sixteenth-century English literature, one would have to know the full impact of these on the vernacular Muse. That others making similar collections of rhetorical devices had in mind the Dutch humanist's principles, laid down so clearly in our text, is clearly indicated by their acknowledgments to that effect. He had prescribed that teachers make collections of rhetorical flowers from every source for use in their classes. They did,—and many brought their work to print. Thus, at the end of the century, a full selection of quotation-books existed for use, or abuse, by anyone who wished a precise phrase, or figure, *exemplum*, epithet, or poetic line, for the battenning of his literary flock. Erasmus had suggested in his tract that more than one rhetorical device was permissible in a literary composition: Chapman and Lyly used them all. Clearly the practical and specific application of suggestions in *De Ratione Studii* could be carried to extremes.

More important as these germinal influences on the vernacular literature undoubtedly were, *De Ratione Studii* offered at the same time an immediate source for ideas and expressions in both practical and *belle-lettristic* phases of this same literature. An example of the first phase is Reynolde's reliance on the wording of our tract for two examples of the oration in his *Foundacion of Rhetorike*: Aphthonius, the ostensible source, offered only one of these. Later on, for the material on dramatic criticism in his *New Discovery*, Hoole made a mere free translation from another passage in the same. Undue importance was not attached to these direct borrowings, nor to the large number of close textual parallels observed over a wide range of the polite letters. Nevertheless, their existence could not, with justice, be ignored.

De Ratione Studii, in its compendious aim, devolved all reading for theme-material on the shoulders of the teacher; and in this objective is inherent a fifth generalization supported by the evidence gathered in the investigation: to this degree, it authorized the convenient substitution of later hand-book learning for literary material. How, instead of bending their backs to the cruel burden, the schoolmasters merely shifted the load, appeared in their published treatments of Erasmus' own hastily compiled collections of such passages from the Classical literature. Instead of taking these collections as a *point de départ*, they frequently were content only to index and edit what was already at hand, possibly on the theory that half a loaf was better than none. The magnificent achievement of Lycosthenes in classifying and bringing up to date Erasmus' *Adagia*, for example, merited a lyric prefatory outburst from an appreciative friend. The last stage of this process of literary digestion was to be Farnaby's next-century *Index Rhetoricus*, almost an answer to the prayer of (schoolmaster) John Brinsley for an index to the best items in the chief collections of the day, among which the *Adagia* held a place of honor. The art and craft of rhetoric was, by this time, no longer long to learn. In this carrying of convenience in the search for literary *copia* to extremes, *De Ratione Etudii* must bear its full share of responsibility: it had issued the order and had suggested examples, including the *Adagia*, of compendia for this purpose. But where Erasmus presumed on the discreet judgment of a knowing master in this matter, the increasing ease of quotation-books reference, coupled with the desire to appear learned, was a not infrequent abuse,—the *reductio ad absurdum* of the Erasmian method.

Presence of the underlying thought in *De Ratione Studii* was noted, finally, in the shift of literary expression from traditional Latin to nationalistic English. Evidence of this appeared, grammatically speaking, in the Authorized Grammar with its altered prayers, and preponderance of translated parallels for the examples of Latin rules. Taverner's reworking of certain Erasmian *Adagia*, and Wilson's *Rhetorique*, were indicative of the continuance of this influence in the vernacular rhetorical philosophy, as well. Aphthonius, whom Erasmus recommended in his essay, was Englished by Reynolde in 1567. The only translations of the *Colloquia* down to the nineteenth century were made in sixteenth-century English. The connection of the shift to English in school text-books with this tract would not be adequately

suggested without reference to Udall's *Floures of Terence*, the introductory epistle of which contained a number of stylistic parallels. Mulcaster, most nationalistic of all the theorists, appeared in full perspective only on the background of its thought. If the foundation which it represented failed to break sharply through the surface of the literature itself, it at least held up the superstructure of the literary forms,—the Baconian essay, and more cultivated poetic types.

In short, Erasmus' *De Ratione Studii*, with its program of studies and rhetorical methodology, was the Neo-Latin basis of sixteenth-century English literature. Text-books of the time might be in the Latin tongue, but as they have been shown to correspond in greater or less degree to this systematic grammar-school treatise which went through over seventy editions during the period under investigation, so also they are the key—of which not all critics are aware—to the phenomena of Renaissance English style. Examples are plentiful. The English lack of concern for finer points of syntax, far from being symptomatic of ignorance or carelessness, went no further than the Erasmian principles of grammar, or *De Copia* precept sanctioning such whimsical liberties as the use of a singular form for a plural, a third-declensional ending where one would expect a second, and the like,—all for the sake of variety. The key to the breadth of theme and luxuriance of figurative language in sixteenth-century English literature is, similarly, the method of amplification and embellishment outlined in the *De Ratione Studii* and developed at length in the *De Copia* or such derivative rhetorics as that of Susenbrotus. *De Ratione Studii* itself exemplified more rhetorical figures than some writers of the present day will use, or even recognize. Many of the most learned allusions in this literature came of wide reading in the Latin handbooks of the day, not only in school-composition under a master's birch, but in the mature work of men whose quick-stung pride alone, as that of Harvey or Nashe, could lead to mutual indictment and re-primination on this count. If the striking rhetoric of the English Renaissance drama derived from the compositional principles so succinctly summarized and promulgated in *De Ratione Studii*, the same principles were responsible, last of all, for every element of so-called Euphistic prose as well. The indiscriminate dispersion of its compositional techniques, unbalanced by the sense of judgment which the tract makes the last perfection of education, resulted in the rhetorical confusion of which Bacon

complained at the beginning of a new age. Stylistic decadence was in the air. The dayspring had not fulfilled its promise.

[There follows a photographic reproduction of the basic text of *De Ratione Studii*, an English translation, variant and explanatory notes on the text, an appendix containing the uncollated section of the G-text, and a bibliography of works used in the preparation of this edition.]

¹ For these letters, cf. *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi*, ed. Percy S. Allen, Oxford, 1906, I, 467, 470; English versions in *The Epistles of Erasmus*, transl. Francis M. Nichols, London, 1904, II, 21, 24 f.

² The passage in question is an allusion to the time to be saved by the use of Erasmus' method of instruction:

Colet: . . . paucioribus annis posse adolescentes perducere ad mediocrem vtriusque linguae eloquentiam, quam isti litteratores ad balbutiem . . .

Erasmus: . . . paucioribus annis adolescentes ad vtriusque linguae mediocrem etiam eloquentiam perducturum . . . quam isti litteratores ad qualemcumque illam suam balbutiem . . .

³ Albert Hyma, "Erasmus and the Oxford Reformers (1493-1403)," *Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* n. s. 25, 1932, 69 ff.

⁴ John Dorne's *Day-Book*, a record of book-sales at Oxford in 1520, (ed. Oxford Historical Society, *Collectanea* I, Oxford, 1885, 71-177), shows that one-seventh of all significant titles sold were works by Erasmus. *De Ratione Studii* is specified in one sale, but implied in every sale of the *De Copia* (17), and in at least some sales of the *Adagia* (9), *De Constructione* (30), *Colloquia* (47), etc. Being a slender work, it was in general neither published separately nor given the title of the volume in which it appeared. It was sold and read and used in connection with the above grammar-school text-books with which it happened to be bound.

⁵ The *De Ratione Studii* went through seventy-three editions in the sixteenth-century: Ferdinand van der Haeghen, *Bibliotheca Erasmi*, Gand, 1893, 169 ff. Twenty editions are listed between 1511 and 1520.

⁶ "Über die Methode des Studiums," transl. Dietrich Reichling, *Ausgewählte Pädagogische Schriften des Desiderius Erasmus*, Bibliothek der katholischen Pädagogik 8, Freiburg, 1896, 102 ff.

⁷ Frederic Seebohm, *The Oxford Reformers*, London, 1896, 217 f.

⁸ William H. Woodward, *Desiderius Erasmus Concerning the Aim and Method of Education*, Cambridge, 1904, 161 ff.

⁹ The basic text used in the present edition is: ERASMI ROTERDAMI/ De ratione studii, ac legendi, /interpretandiq; auctores/libellus aureus/ Officium discipulorum ex Quintiliano/ Qui primo legendi, ex eodem. / . . . EX RECOGNITIONE Autoris; /dum Mense Augusto Argenti de- / geret, anno M. D. XIII. It is photographically reproduced from University of Illinois rotographs of a copy in the Bodleian Library.

¹⁰ Albert Hyma, *op. cit.*, *Appendix*, 129-134, has made a first step in this direction by his collection of the earlier textual phase (1511) with the authorized edition (1514), but only up to the end of the first section of the complete text. Other shortcomings of his work are the omission of the introductory epistle and the failure to clarify the textual history of the work between the editions actually collated.

Editions collated in the present study are: B—Paris (Badius) 1512; C—Paris (Badius) 1514; D—Strassburg (Knoblouchus) 1522; E—Paris (Stephanus) 1527; F—*Opera Omnia*, Leyden (Vander) 1703; and G—Paris (Caesareo) 1511, the earlier, fragmentary unauthorized form.

¹¹ Some seventy errors in B were corrected by Badius in C: the remainder, in Schürer's edition a few months later. For an intimation that in publishing the authorized edition, Schürer used Badius' edition, cf. *Opus Epistolarum* (Allen) II, 271, 351.

VITA

James Francis Larkin, the son of John Dennis, and Mary Ann (Kelly) Larkin, was born in the town of Money Creek, McLean County, Illinois, on August 25, 1912; attended local rural school, Trinity High School in Bloomington, Illinois, and St. Viator College, Bourbonnais, Illinois, graduating in 1932; became a member of the Viatorian Religious Community in 1935, after a year of Novitiate; studied theology in The Catholic University of America, taking part-time work in Graduate English; was ordained to the Priesthood, February 24, 1939; during 1939-1940, taught English in St. Philip Boys' High School, Chicago, Illinois; registered in The University of Illinois Graduate School in the summer of 1940, and every term thereafter, in courses under Professors Baldwin, Fletcher, Graham, Randall, and the late H. S. V. Jones, Associate Professor Secord, and Associates Odegaard and Wasserman; was appointed to a third-year fellowship in 1942. In his research, he enjoyed the learned direction of Thomas W. Baldwin, who also kindly permitted him to use valuable unpublished materials.

